

Let us consider...

As we witness what is unfolding in our Nation after the 2016 Elections, there is room for concern as emotions and feelings run high, but let us have faith in ourselves as residents of America and also as humanity.

For me, the wise counsel of Prince Shotoku comes to mind. Prince Shotoku lived in a period of uncertainty and needed to unite various factions so that the country could be unified, better organized and prosper. He mentioned some guiding principles which are still important for us, today, to consider. As Article 1 in his 17-Article Constitution, he emphasized the value of harmony in society with the words "Harmony is to be valued." He sought harmony and collaboration among the various individuals and factions that were divided and wanted them to work together towards a common goal, a unified nation. Prince Shotoku realized how we, many times, each tend to emphasize and focus on our own viewpoints and disregard that of others to the point of not even lending an ear. He realized that if we each continue to do this we would get nowhere as no discussion could even begin. The Prince was very astute and sensitive to the fact that, too often, we are driven by our egos and also our emotions and feelings like anger, fear, doubt and arrogance. Thus, in Article 10, he shares his wisdom when he says,

Let us cease from wrath and refrain from angry looks. Nor let us be resentful when others differ from us. For all people have hearts and each heart has its own leanings. Their right is our wrong, and our right is their wrong. We are not unquestionably sages, nor are they unquestionably fools. Both of us are simply ordinary people. How can any person lay down a rule by which to distinguish right from wrong? For we are all, one with another, wise and foolish, like a ring which has no end.

From A Guide to Japanese Buddhism-BuddhaNet  
[www.buddhanet.net/nippon/nippon\\_partIII.html](http://www.buddhanet.net/nippon/nippon_partIII.html)

He sincerely revered The Three Treasures of Buddhism which also speaks of the middle way in which we avoid extremes. As the Historic Buddha shared if the strings of a lute are too tight it will break, on the other hand, if the strings are too loose the lute will not produce its music. What is needed are mutual respect, balance, trust, participation and collaboration and adherence to the virtue of non-violence by all of us. Moreover, we should see the value of interdependence by realizing that we are all interrelated and interconnected as Indra's Net, beautifully and profoundly, shares. It is a fact that we affect each other locally, nationally, internationally and even galactically through our thoughts, words and actions and how we approach a matter is just as important as the goal or objective. The intent of this message is not to dissuade people to express their thoughts through peaceful rallies and methods. As we face our challenges (to alleviate suffering and promote peace, happiness and people's welfare) as a

Nation, this message is suggesting that we must consider ways, approaches and outcomes which emphasize the oneness and equality of life with all its diversity, foster mutual respect and harmony amongst all, and will nurture unity in our Nation and the World from today and into the future. In Hawaii, I believe, the Spirit of Aloha will guide us in our endeavors. As a Jodo Shinshu Buddhist, I say, may we (all) be guided and inspired by an All-Inclusive Wisdom and All-Embracing Compassion.

Let us “Mutually reflect, respect and interact.”

Eric Matsumoto

Bishop, Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii